COMMUNICATING EUROPE
JOURNALS AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION 1939-1979
Introduction

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It is now widely acquired the awareness that the process of European unification is not a matter concerning exclusively (or mainly) the governments of the Member States and their foreign policy and diplomacy. This awareness has become even stronger in the post-bipolar world and in the gradual emergence of Europe as an autonomous subject of international relations. In the analysis of the process of European integration, of its crisis and of its raises, of its ideals and of its concrete achievements, it is not possible to ignore the role of civil society in its multiform variety of expression, from economics to politics, from social aspects to the cultural and religious ones.

The relationship between civil society and European integration process has been already analyzed in a previous conference organized by the Associazione universitaria di studi europei (AUSE-ECSA Italy), whose proceedings were published with the title Consensus and European Integration: An Historical Perspective by Peter Lang in this same collection.

The present work is an ideal extension of that first initiative, and contains the proceedings of the conference Communicating Europe. Journals and European Integration 1939-1979 organized by AUSE (with the support of the Action Jean Monnet, Lifelong Learning Programme) at the University of Perugia and Assisi from 2 to 4 May 2013.

The analytical perspective adopted in this conference reflects the desire to analyze one of the instruments through which the process of “socialization” of public opinion to the issues “European” has been developed.

Actually, the channels through which it was decided to “communicate” European integration to citizens are numerous, and – as far as their classification is extremely difficult – these channels can be categorized into i) “official” or “direct” (since they are activated by the
Community or national institutions), as primarily designed to foster knowledge among the general public of the European Community/Union (its institutional structure, its policies, initiatives, so its “present”, but also its history, “the past”, and its objectives, “the future”), and ii) “unofficial”, that means that they are not specifically dedicated to informing citizens about the European Community/Union, even if they participate to the spread of a “European awareness” since they have been able to encourage reflection on the projects of unification and its different hypotheses of realization.

Among the key tools for the dissemination of different “visions of Europe”, there were the political and cultural journals; however, those economic and legal reviews developed and widely spread in the post-war period were no less important, thanks also to the return to the free debate of ideas in democracies in Western Europe.

The contributions in this volume examine, in particular, the debate on European unification developed between the end of World War I and 1979 (the year of the first direct elections of the European Parliament by universal suffrage) in two types of magazines: those not exclusively dedicated to the “European” themes, but particularly significant for the impact they had in the cultural-political debate and in the concrete unfolding of the process of European integration; and those militant magazines, belonging to the European and federalist area, whose proactive role was fundamental both for the theoretical elaboration of the ideas as the basis of the future of the European continent, and for the practical propaganda. All these publications contributed in different ways to the spread of knowledge of European integration, of its implications and of its political, social and economic consequences. No less important – and this is the third type of journals taken into consideration in the book – has been the birth and development of magazines directly sponsored by the Community institutions, whose action was framed within a real “European communication”, made by the EC institutions (particularly the Commission in Brussels) since their origins.

The set of essays published in this volume seems to present a character of undoubted originality. The papers help to fill a gap in
historiography, since for the first time the theme of “European integration in journals” (and its implications for the knowledge of current Community between citizens) is tackled in a systematic way, with a wide range of interventions that deals with reviews belonging to different areas.

Effectively, journals are an interesting laboratory at least for two reasons: first of all they can measure in the examined period the capacity that the civil society had to be listened by the décideurs on the relevant topic such as the project of European unification; secondly, it is interesting to underline how in these journals positions even critical towards the way to realise the European Community were elaborated. Some of this critical positions (such as the renounce to political unification, the lack of involvement of the citizens, the prevalence of the economic aspect to the social dimension, etc.) are extremely important, both in an Europeanist view (which is addressed to the individuation of solutions for the deepening of the community ties among the member states), and for the comprehension of the reasons which the critical positions toward the policies of the European Union are based on.

The study of the political and cultural debate that accompanied the birth of the process of European integration can provide many reflections also on the topic of communication nowadays; topics such as the European citizenship and the need of diffusion of European informative canals were the first fixed points of the actions of federalists and Europeists.

Moreover, this is an increasingly relevant topic, as shown by some recent initiatives put in place by the European Union. In August 2004 the president of the European Commission, Barroso, assigned to the vice-president Margot Wallström the portfolio of the institutional relations and of the strategy of communication in order to improve the knowledge of Europe among the citizens. In October 2005 the Commission launched a deep reflection, the so-called Plan D, finalized to keep the interest for Europe by the citizens, through the development of the mean of communication and information. In February 2006 the White Book for a European Policy of Communication has been adopted
and in October 2007 the communication entitled *Together for Communicate Europe* has been presented to the European parliament, to the Council, to the Social and Economic Committee, and to the Committee of Regions. The Commission has promoted a new approach for realizing a passage from a communication based on the institutions to a communication centred on the citizens. Frankly speaking it is a coming back to the origins.

The expected principal impact of this publication is an important deepening of the knowledge on a fundamental topic of the process of European integration. Indeed, if it is true that the process of European integration, especially in its beginnings, had been conceived by the political elites, it is true also that the public opinion cannot be considered only an irrelevant actor in the historical dynamics which led the Old Continent to the unification.